The Dissertation Committee for William Thomas Fraser IV Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Exploring the Relationship Between Fusion with a Cause and Essentialist Thinking

Committee:

William B. Swann, Jr., Supervisor

Robert Josephs

Marlone Henderson

Angel Gomez

Exploring the Relationship Between Fusion with a Cause and Essentialist Thinking

by

William Thomas Fraser IV, B.A.

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Exploring the Relationship Between Fusion with a Cause and Essentialist Thinking

William Thomas Fraser IV, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: William B. Swann, Jr.

Some people become so deeply bonded to various causes that their beliefs define who they are. This deep bond with causes can be understood within a framework of identity fusion. When individuals view a cause as a self-defining aspect of their identity, they feel a sense of underlying similarity—or *shared essence*—with other cause supporters based on their common beliefs. Because strongly fused individuals feel essentially similar to fellow cause supporters, they may likewise *essentialize* opponents of the cause by categorizing them into distinct "natural kinds" based on their ideological stance toward the cause. This tendency for essentialist thinking leads strongly fused individuals to discriminate against people who hold opposing beliefs about the cause. To test these ideas, I conducted 6 studies. Two studies showed that fusion with a cause predicted the tendency to essentialize others based on their sentiments toward the cause with which participants were fused (Study 1), but not other causes (Study 2). Three follow-up studies (Studies 3-5) demonstrated that fusion with a cause predicted discrimination against cause opponents, and that this effect was mediated by essentialist beliefs. Study 5 also showed that strongly fused individuals demonstrated intentions to attend events where

they could antagonize cause opponents. Study 6 showed that fusion with a cause predicted political voting behaviors, but not as strongly as fusion with political party. Collectively, these studies identified a class of individuals who were prone to discrimination on the basis of ideology and the cognitive underpinnings of this predisposition.

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Introduction

Almost every day, it seems, the news media describe events in which individuals or groups passionately battle over some sociopolitical issue. From animal rights, to abortion rights, to gun rights, people often become deeply bonded to the principles that they stand for and go to great lengths to fight for them. When it comes to sociopolitical issues like these, most people have at least some opinion about which side of a given argument makes the most sense. For example, the issue of abortion rights has been a heated sociopolitical topic for several decades, and most people tend to fall either on the "pro-choice" or "pro-life" side of the fence. Despite the ubiquitous use of these social category labels, this binary categorization only reflects one dimension along which individuals can differ with regard to their stances on abortion rights. In reality, there are important individual differences with regard to people's stances on sociopolitical issues that have nothing to do with the content of one's beliefs. While virtually everybody can find one side of a given sociopolitical debate that they can agree with to some extent, some people experience a deep feeling of oneness with their sociopolitical beliefs to the point that their beliefs become an essential, self-defining part of who they are. In extreme cases, some people perceive their beliefs about certain sociopolitical issues to be as self-defining as their own religion, ethnicity, or even gender.

The central premise of this paper is that such a deep feeling of oneness with one's beliefs can have a powerful influence over an individual's thoughts and behaviors toward other people. Specifically, when individuals experience a deep feeling of oneness with a

set of principles and goals—or a *cause*—they tend to categorize those who disagree into distinct "natural kinds" based on their ideological stance toward the cause. These tendencies lead to discrimination against ideological adversaries, and resistance to romantic or even social involvement with those who disagree.

The concepts discussed in this paper have intellectual roots in two major lines of research. One intellectual ancestor is a theory of group alignment called *identity fusion*. Whereas prior research on identity fusion has focused on the nature and consequences of feeling a deep sense of oneness (i.e., being "fused") with a *group,* I explored the cognitive and behavioral implications of being fused with a *cause*. In addition, whereas past work has focused on pro-ingroup behavior, I emphasize thought and action towards outgroups.

The other intellectual ancestor of this work is theory and research on *psychological essentialism*. Past research on this topic has investigated the effects of viewing certain categories of people (e.g., women, racial groups, homosexuals) as having an underlying essence that one cannot observe directly. However, little attention has been paid to exploring which individual difference variables may lead someone to view particular categories of people as having underlying essences. Here, I test the predictions that individuals strongly fused with a cause are especially prone to essentialize other people based on whether they support or oppose that cause, and that these essentialist beliefs will cause them to discriminate against the persons they have essentialized. To place this research in context, I begin by reviewing past work on identity fusion and psychological essentialism.

Identity fusion

Identity fusion theory suggests that group members sometimes develop a powerful, visceral sense of "oneness" with their group. This sense of oneness is associated with porous boundaries between the personal and group identity; boundaries that allow for each identity to synergistically energize the other. Identity fusion resembles the strong feelings of closeness developed in some dyadic relationships (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991), except instead of experiencing love and devotion toward a single other, strongly fused individuals experience these sentiments toward a group. Numerous studies have shown that identity fused individuals are especially prone to endorse extreme pro-group behavior, including sacrificing one's own life for the sake of the group (Fredman et al., 2015; Swann, Jetten, Gomez, Whitehouse, & Bastian, 2012). The strong association between identity fusion and extreme pro-group behavior has been the hallmark of identity fusion research to date.

Identity fusion theory shares some conceptual overlap with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994) in that both theoretical approaches rest on a distinction between people's personal and social identities. The concept of a personal identity refers to aspects of the self that make someone unique (e.g., being funny, short, or whimsical), while the social identity refers to aspects of the self that aligns someone with a group (e.g., being an American or Catholic; James, 1890). Although these two aspects of the self are central elements of both identity fusion theory and the social identity perspective, there are four core principles of identity fusion that distinguish it from other forms of group alignment.

First, fusion theory asserts that strongly fused individuals maintain a highly agentic personal self within group contexts. In contrast, social identity theory suggests that, when the group identity is salient, group members define themselves only in terms of their social identity and "depersonalize" by perceiving themselves and other group members as categorically interchangeable. The *agentic personal self* principle of fusion theory suggests that strongly fused individuals experience a strong feeling of group-directed agency over the group which motivates them to enact pro-group behaviors (Gomez et al., 2011). The results of several studies support this proposition. In one series of studies, researchers experimentally increased physiological arousal through physical exercise (sprinting, riding an exercycle, and playing dodgeball). As expected, increases in arousal heightened endorsement of self-sacrifice for the group among strongly fused, but not weakly fused persons (Swann et al., 2010). In other studies, researchers measured participants' self-reported feelings of group-directed agency (e.g., "I am responsible for my group's actions") and found that perceptions of personal agency mediated links between fusion and pro-group behavior (Gomez et al., 2011).

Second, while the social identity perspective assumes that the personal and social identities compete for psychological salience, fusion theory's *identity synergy* principle assumes that both identities can be salient at the same time and can activate one another to reinforce similar behavioral outcomes. For example, when the personal selves of strongly fused individuals are made salient, they become especially willing to endorse fighting and dying to protect the group (Swann et al., 2009).

Third, whereas the social identity perspective assumes that alignment to the group is based solely on categorical ties to the group and involves viewing other group members as categorically interchangeable, fusion theory suggests that strongly fused group members care as much or even more about their relationships with individual group members as they do their relationship with the abstract, collective group entity. The *relational ties* principle of fusion theory assumes that strongly fused group members form close familial bonds (imagined or actual) with other members of the group, and that these bonds motivate behavior. Fourth, the *irrevocability* principle of fusion theory suggests that once people fuse with a group, they tend to remain fused (Swann et al., 2012). In contrast, highly identified persons should remain devoted to the group only insofar as the immediate contextual influences support such devotion.

By definition, strongly fused individuals have a strong emotional connection with the group. It is thus not surprising that individuals who are strongly fused with a group experience heightened emotional arousal after receiving information indicating that their group is imperiled in some way, and that this emotional arousal motivates them to engage in pro-group behavior. For example, when individuals strongly fused with a group learned that group members might be killed in a hypothetical trolley dilemma, they became upset and these emotional reactions predicted subsequent endorsement of self-sacrifice for the group (Swann et al., 2014b).

A defining feature of identity fusion that is particularly relevant to the present research involves the concept of *shared essence*, which refers to a sense of deep, underlying similarity among members of a particular category (Medin & Ortony, 1989).

Prior work on shared essence has suggested that "ingroups" and "outgroups" are sometimes perceived to resemble natural kinds or species (Rothbart & Taylor, 1992), but the possibility that some individuals are more prone to such perceptions than others has been largely overlooked. People have been shown to attribute shared essence to entire groups of genetically unrelated individuals (Gelman, 2003; Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000; Hirschfeld, 1996; Medin & Ortony, 1989; Rothbart & Taylor, 1992). Identity fusion theory suggests that when people are fused with groups, even large heterogeneous groups, they feel they share something in common with other group members such as blood, deep attraction, national identity, or a history of suffering (Swann et al., 2012). Perceptions of shared essence are not only believed to be associated with identity fusion, but may even give rise to the development of fusion. Furthermore, fusion theory suggests that perceptions of shared essence with other group members may explain why strongly fused individuals are willing to make extreme sacrifices for fellow group members whom they often do not even know. For example, priming perceptions of shared core values among ingroup members has been shown to increase willingness of strongly fused people to endorse fighting and dying for their group (Swann et al., 2014a).

Identity fusion research to date has focused on the nature and consequences of being fused with groups. However, a central assumption of the present report is that the feeling of oneness that characterizes identity fusion may not be limited to groups. The purpose of this project is to explore the possibility that fusion with *cause* (i.e., a set of principles and goals) may have similar cognitive and behavioral consequences as identity

fusion with a *group*. Before elaborating on the potential implications of fusion with a cause, the following section explains the nature and core features of the construct.

Defining fusion with a cause

Just as being fused with a group is different from merely being a member of a group, being fused with a cause is different from simply believing in a cause. The word "cause" can be defined in many ways, but in the context of this project, a cause will be defined as a principle, goal, or movement that can be defended or advocated. When people become fused with a cause, it becomes an essential, self-defining aspect of one's identity. Strongly fused individuals feel immersed in the principles associated with the cause and view their support for the cause as an irrevocable part of their identity rather than a mere ideological stance. Fusion with a cause occurs when an individual experiences a visceral feeling of oneness with a set of principles and goals.

The experience of being fused with a cause and a group are similar in many important ways. First, both forms of fusion involve the union of a personal self with another abstraction. Whereas identity fusion with groups involves the personal self joining with the social self, fusion with a cause involves the union between the personal self and a set of principles and goals.

Second, strongly fused individuals experience a powerful emotional bond not only with the cause but all that it stands for. Accordingly, individuals strongly fused with a cause should experience intense emotional arousal when the cause or its supporters are threatened or imperiled in some way. Furthermore, in line with the previously mentioned findings from Swann and colleagues (2014b), it is expected that strongly fused individuals' emotional reactions to threats to the cause will lead to retaliatory behaviors against perpetrators of the threat.

Third, fusion with a cause involves a similar sense of personal agency experienced by individuals strongly fused with a group. Fusion theory assumes that strongly fused individuals experience a heightened sense of group-directed agency which arises from the union between the personal and group identities. Because of this union, strongly fused individuals feel as though they must do everything in their power to further the goals of the group. Because fusion with a cause involves a similar union between the self and the cause, individuals strongly fused with a cause feel a similar sense of commitment to acting on behalf of the cause. Individuals strongly fused with a cause feel a sense of personal responsibility over the cause, as though they are in the "driver's seat" when it comes to cause-related matters. This sense of agency makes individuals strongly fused with a cause uniquely poised to engage in behaviors that benefit the cause.

Fourth, individuals strongly fused with a cause will feel a sense of shared essence with fellow cause supporters. While prior research on shared essence has shown that perceptions of shared essence among groups are especially prominent in groups that are highly entitative (McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson, & Grace, 1995; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997) or organized around endogamy and descent (Gil-White, 2001), I propose that feeling a visceral sense of oneness with a cause elicits feelings of shared essence with fellow cause supporters based solely on knowledge of shared ideology. Because strongly fused individuals perceive their support for the cause as a self-defining aspect of their identity, they feel fundamentally similar to others who share a common perspective toward the cause.

It is important to note that although fusion with a cause elicits perceptions of shared essence among fellow cause-supporters, fusion with a cause can occur without the presence of a salient or entitative group, just as fusion with a group can occur even if the group is not rooted in a particular ideology or cause. A group can be defined as "two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships" (Forsyth, 2006). All groups are defined by a specific set of people. It is the members of a group that define it. Some groups, like religions, are explicitly rooted in a system of beliefs. These ideologically-based groups also consist of a clearly defined set of individuals. Whereas a cause is a specific issue that can be advocated or supported, an ideologically-based group like a religion has many "issues" or beliefs that it stands for. For example, one of the principles of Catholicism is that abortion is immoral because a child is considered alive at conception. However, this is only one "cause" in which Catholics believe. A cause, in contrast, is more narrow than a group or an ideologically-based group in that it involves support for a specific and individual issue. Furthermore, a cause is not defined by a group of people or a system of beliefs and rituals, but a specific set of beliefs about a specific issue. There are certain cases in which a cause is associated with a group to a certain extent. For example, animal rights may be associated with groups that support animal rights, like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). One could conceive of a continuum that ranges from fusion with a cause to fusion with a group. This project focuses on fusion that falls on the "cause" side of the continuum.

Prior work on identity fusion and shared essence has focused on the relations of perceptions of shared essence to pro-*ingroup* behavior. The present research was

designed to examine potential links between fusion with a cause, shared essence, and reactions to outgroup members (i.e., individuals who do not share cause). In particular, individuals who are strongly fused with a cause feel a sense of shared essence with others supporters of the cause, but perceive opponents of the cause as being essentially dissimilar from themselves. The mechanisms underlying this process are described next.

Psychological essentialism

Research on psychological essentialism suggests that certain categories have an underlying reality or true nature that one cannot observe directly but that gives an object its identity, and is responsible for other similarities that category members share (Gelman, 2004). Essentialist beliefs have been studied in relation to a wide range of social categories (e.g., race (Hirschfeld, 1996), ethnicity (Gil-White, 2001; Verkuyten, 2003), gender (Mahalingam, 2003), sexual orientation (Haslam & Levy, 2006), and Mental Disorder (Haslam & Ernst, 2002)), but little attention has been paid to essentialist beliefs based on the ideology of others. Furthermore, researchers have largely overlooked the possibility that individual differences, such as fusion with a cause, may dictate which particular social categories one perceives as having underlying essential properties

The link between fusion with a cause and essentialist thinking grows out of the possibility that strongly fused individuals perceive their support of the cause as an essential, self-defining aspect of their identity. Due to the self-defining nature of the cause, strongly fused individuals tend to see the world through "cause-colored glasses", including a tendency to see sentiments toward the cause as defining aspects of the identities of other people. Another reason that fusion with a cause leads to essentialist thinking is that strongly fused individuals have a deep emotional connection with the cause and view the cause as deeply personally important. Because they are so passionate about the cause, strongly fused individuals are intolerant of those who equivocate regarding the cause. Strongly fused individuals therefore adopt a "you're either with us, or against us" perspective by categorizing other people into fundamentally distinct

"natural kinds" based on whether they support or oppose the cause. This tendency to essentialize others leads to discrimination and unwillingness to interact with ideological adversaries.

It is important to note that prior research on identity fusion has investigated the potential relationship between fusion and essentialist beliefs. Gomez et al. (2011) found that identity fusion with country (Spain) was not associated with global essentialist beliefs (i.e., the belief, that, in general, certain categories have an underlying essence or true nature), which suggests that fusion is not associated with a general predisposition for essentialist thinking. This raises an important point of clarification for the present analysis: Fusion only leads to essentialist beliefs about the abstraction (e.g., cause, group) with which an individual is fused. For example, someone who is strongly fused with the pro-choice position on abortion rights will not necessarily believe that (e.g.,) Muslims, white people, and New York Yankees fans have underlying essential properties. However, because the pro-choice position is an essential part of his/her own identity, this strongly fused person will view the pro-choice position as a social category—just like race, religion, or gender—that divides individuals into "natural kinds" based on their support or opposition of the position. In other words, an individual strongly fused with the pro-choice position would hold essentialist beliefs about pro-choice supporters and pro-life supporters. Therefore, individuals strongly fused with a cause only exhibit essentialist beliefs toward the proponents and adversaries of the cause with which they are fused.

For strongly fused people, the combined effects of essentialist thinking and cause-directed agency can have important behavioral implications. Examples of behaviors rooted in essentialist beliefs toward others could include prejudice, discrimination, derogation, dehumanization, and even efforts to completely avoid interacting with ideological adversaries. Because strongly fused individuals not only hold essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward the cause, but also channel feelings of personal agency into cause-related behaviors, strongly fused individuals' are uniquely prone to *act* on their essentialist beliefs.

Constructs related to fusion with a cause

To highlight the novel theoretical contribution of fusion with a cause, it is important to distinguish it from other conceptually related constructs. On a superficial level, fusion with a cause resembles attitudes toward a cause in that both phenomena involve individuals holding beliefs about a certain topic or issue. Attitudes can be broken down into many dimensions, or "facets". The attitude facets that share the most conceptual similarity with fusion are attitude certainty, importance, involvement, and centrality. Below, I first provide an overview of these facets of attitudes.

Attitude certainty is considered a facet of attitude strength and has been referred to as the degree to which an individual is confident in his or her attitude toward an object (Krosnick and Petty, 1995), the sense of conviction someone has about an attitude (Abelson, 1988), and the extent to which someone views an attitude as correct or valid (Gross, Holtz, & Miller, 1995). Attitude certainty is usually measured following a report of general attitude favorability using a singe-item which directly asks "How certain are you of your attitude toward *attitude object*?" (Norman, 1975; Fazio & Zanna, 1978; Tormala, Clarkson, & Petty, 2006; Clarkson et al., 2009).

Attitude importance is defined as an individual's subjective sense of the concern, caring, and psychological significance he or she attaches to an attitude (Krosnick, 1988; Krosnick and Petty, 1995). Attitude importance is measured by asking subjects how important an issue is to them personally and how much they personally care about an issue (Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995). Attitude involvement is conceptually similar to attitude importance and has been defined as the extent to which a person attaches

subjective importance to a given issue (Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, & Carnot, 1993; Lavine, Huff, et al., 1998). Attitude involvement has also been referred to as the extent to which an attitude object is closely connected to one's important personal goals, desires, and wishes (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). Similar to attitude importance, attitude involvement has been measured by asking participants to rate the extent to which an issue is personally important, and the extent to which it is important that the government does what the respondent thinks is best on the issue (Lavine, Borgida, & Sullivan, 2000).

Attitude centrality has been defined in many different ways. Attitude centrality has been conceptualized as the extent of functional connectedness among attitudes (Lewin, 1951; Rokeach, 1960; Katz, 1960; Bem, 1970), "the degree to which one particular opinion has implications and consequences for others" (Tetlock & Suedfeld, 1976), and "the proportion of 'mental time' that is occupied by attention to the attitude object over substantial periods" (Converse, 1970). This construct has frequently been measured using questions about the importance of an attitude (Converse, 1964; Judd & Krosnick, 1982; Krosnick, 1986; Petersen & Dutton, 1975; Schuman & Presser, 1981), but the operational definition of attitude centrality that shares the most conceptual similarity with fusion with a cause is the extent to which one's opinion about an object reflects one's core values and beliefs (Clarkson et. al., 2009).

In addition to attitudes, there are other noteworthy lines of research that share conceptual similarity with fusion with a cause. Research on sacred values has looked at the consequences of holding certain moral beliefs as being absolute and inviolable (Atran & Axelrod, 2008). Research on "moral mandates" (Skitka, 2010) and ideology

(Converse, 1964) have investigated the consequences of attitudes being held with strong moral or ideological conviction, respectively. These constructs share conceptual similarity with fusion with a cause in that they all pertain to various aspects of an individual's subjective relationship with their beliefs. Nevertheless, because fusion with a cause is defined by perceptions of shared essence with fellow cause supporters, it is uniquely associated with holding essentialist beliefs toward others based on their opinion about the cause. Additionally, because strongly fused persons feel a strong sense of agency and control over the cause, they are especially likely to act on their essentialist-related beliefs. The present research empirically tests whether fusion with a cause is indeed associated with essentialist beliefs and behaviors.

To examine the issues outlined in the previous sections, I have conducted a series of studies that explore the unique cognitive and behavioral consequences of fusion with a cause. In particular, the purpose of this project is to: (a) investigate the relationship between fusion with a cause and essentialist beliefs toward others based on their opinions about the cause, (b) test the prediction that essentialist beliefs motivate strongly fused individuals to endorse discrimination against non-like-minded individuals, and (c) determine whether threats to the cause amplify the effects of fusion and essentialist thinking on endorsement of discriminatory behaviors.

Study 1

Past conceptual analysis and empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that fusion with a cause should be an especially strong predictor of the tendency to essentialize others based on their beliefs about the cause. In Study 1, I sought to determine whether fusion with a cause is associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on whether they support or oppose the cause. Additionally, Study 1 measured eight facets of attitudes which share conceptual overlap with fusion—attitude favorability, attitude certainty, attitude importance, attitude involvement, attitude centrality, attitude ambivalence, attitude accessibility, and attitude extremity—to determine whether the tendency to hold essentialist beliefs about others based on their opinion about the cause is uniquely predicted by fusion, or whether simply holding attitudes about a cause is sufficient to produce such essentialist beliefs.

Study 1 measured fusion with a cause and essentialist beliefs in the contexts of abortion rights and gun rights. These issues were chosen to be the focal causes with which to measure fusion in this study because abortion rights and gun rights have been prominent topics of sociopolitical debate for several decades, and virtually everyone has an opinion about or is at least familiar with the dominant perspectives on the issues. Additionally, prior exploratory research has indicated that fusion with one's position on abortion rights and gun rights are normally distributed among Mechanical Turk participants. Importantly, although this study only measured fusion with a cause and essentialist thinking in the context of abortion rights and gun rights, the effects should hold true in the context of other causes as well.

Methods

Study 1 was broken down into two sections, 1a and 1b, which were identical except that 1a was conducted in the context of abortion rights, while 1b was conducted in the context of gun rights. For Study 1a, a sample of 123 participants was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, while Study 1b recruited a sample of 122 from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Study 1a was limited to individuals who side with either the pro-choice or pro-life position on the issue of abortion rights, and Study 1b was limited to individuals who side with either the pro-gun-rights or pro-gun-control position on the issue of gun rights. The study consisted of an online survey which Mechanical Turk workers completed for monetary compensation. Participants learned of the broad purposes of the study, their privacy and confidentiality protections, and that the survey would take them approximately thirty minutes to complete.

In the first section of the survey, participants in Study 1a indicated which position they tend to side with on the issue of abortion rights (pro-choice or pro-life), and participants in Study 1b indicated which position they tend to side with on the issue of gun rights (pro-gun-control or pro-gun-rights). Next, participants completed a modified version of the verbal fusion scale (Gomez et al., 2011) intended to measure fusion with either their position on abortion rights (1a) or gun rights (1b) (e.g., "I have a deep emotional bond with the pro-choice/pro-gun-control position"). The full version of this scale and all other scales used in this study can be found in the appendix of this paper.

After completing the fusion measure, participants completed measures of eight facets of attitudes. To provide context for these attitude facet measures, participants first

indicated their attitude favorability regarding their position on abortion rights or gun rights (e.g., "What is your opinion about the pro-life/pro-gun-rights position? [against—in favor]"; Tormala, Clarkson, & Petty, 2006). Responses to the attitude favorability item were used to compute two facets of attitudes. Attitude accessibility was computed by measuring the amount of time it took for participants to respond to the attitude favorability item (Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989), and attitude extremity was computed by subtracting the midpoint (5) from the participant's response to the attitude favorability item (1-9) (Binder et al., 2009). Attitude ambivalence was measured using responses to two items and plugging those responses into "the Griffin calculation" (Conner et al., 2003). The first item asks participants to consider only the positive things about (e.g.,) the pro-life/pro-gun-rights position, and to rate how positive those positive things are on a scale from 1-5. The second item asks participants to consider only the negative things about the (e.g.,) pro-life/pro-gun-rights position, and to rate how negative those negative things are on a scale from 1-5. The full version of these items can be found in the appendix. Responses to these items were then plugged into the following equation: Ambivalence $= (P+N)/2 - |P-N|$, which is known as the Griffin calculation. Low scores indicate low ambivalence, which presumably reflects a strong attitude.

Participants then completed measures of attitude certainty (e.g., "How certain are you of your opinion about the pro-life/pro-gun-rights position?"; Fazio & Zanna, 1978), attitude importance (e.g., "To what extent is the pro-life/pro–gun-rights position personally important to you?"; Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995), attitude involvement (e.g., "To what extent is it important that the government does what you

think is best for the pro-life/pro-gun-rights position?"; Lavine, Borgida, & Sullivan, 2000), and attitude centrality ("To what extent does your opinion toward the pro-life/pro-gun-rights position reflect your core values and beliefs?"; Clarkson et al., 2009). Note that the fusion and attitudes measures were presented to participants in random order.

Next, participants completed a scale adapted from Bastian & Haslam (2006) measuring the extent to which participants categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward abortion rights or gun rights. Example items include, "It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on abortion rights/gun rights" and "The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on abortion rights/gun rights". The full scale is included in the appendix.

There were two predictions for Study 1:

- Fusion with one's position on abortion rights/gun rights would be associated with holding essentialist beliefs about other people based on their positions on abortion rights/gun rights
- Fusion would predict essentialist beliefs over and above attitude favorability, attitude extremity, attitude accessibility, attitude ambivalence, attitude certainty, attitude importance, attitude involvement, and attitude centrality

Results

Results from Studies 1a and 1b supported both predictions. In Study 1a, a linear regression model tested the comparative effects of fusion with a cause and attitudes on

the tendency to essentialize others based on their beliefs about abortion rights. Included in the model was the fusion measure and eight individual attitude facet measures (favorability, ambivalence, accessibility, extremity, certainty, importance, involvement, and centrality). Only fusion (β= .448, p=.000) was a statistically significant predictor of holding essentialist beliefs.

In Study 1b, a linear regression model tested the comparative effects of fusion and attitudes on the tendency to essentialize others based on their beliefs about gun rights. Included in this model was the fusion measure and eight individual attitude facet measures (favorability, ambivalence, accessibility, extremity, certainty, importance, involvement, and centrality). Only fusion (β= .522, p=.000) was a statistically significant predictor of holding essentialist beliefs[1].

Overall, Study 1 provided compelling support for the hypothesis that fusion with a cause predicts holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward the cause more strongly than eight measures of attitude facets.

[1] In Studies 1a and 1b, we also tested the comparative effects of fusion and all possible two-way interactions between the eight attitude facets (28 possible two-way interaction terms in each section). In both sections, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .002 (.05/28), no two-way interactions between any attitude facets significantly predicted essentialist beliefs when included in a linear regression model with fusion. However, fusion was a significant predictor of essentialist beliefs in every model at p=.000.

Study 2

In Study 2, I tested the prediction that fusion with a cause is associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward the cause with which the individual is fused, but not based on their stance toward other unrelated causes. This study measured fusion and essentialist beliefs in the context of abortion rights. Additionally, I measured essentialist beliefs about others based on an unrelated cause: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Methods

Study 2 measured fusion with participants' position on abortion rights, and essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance on abortion rights and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A sample of 127 participants was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Study 2 was limited to individuals who side with either the pro-choice or pro-life position on the issue of abortion rights. The study consisted of an online survey which Mechanical Turk workers completed for monetary compensation. Participants learned of the broad purposes of the study, their privacy and confidentiality protections, and that the survey would take them approximately thirty minutes to complete.

In the first section of the survey, participants indicated their position on abortion rights (pro-choice or pro-life). Next, participants completed a modified version of the verbal fusion scale (Gomez et al., 2011) adapted to measure fusion with their position on abortion rights (e.g., "I have a deep emotional bond with the pro-life/pro-choice position").

Next, participants completed a scale adapted from Bastian & Haslam (2006) measuring the extent to which participants categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward abortion rights. Example items include, "It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on abortion rights" and "The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on abortion rights". The full scale is included in the appendix. Participants also completed an essentialist beliefs scale measuring the extent to which they categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Example items include "It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" and "The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict".

There were two predictions for Study 2:

- Fusion with one's position on abortion rights would be associated with holding essentialist beliefs about other people based on their positions on abortion rights
- Fusion with one's position on abortion rights would *not* be associated with holding essentialist beliefs about other people based on unrelated causes, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Results

As predicted, fusion with one's position on abortion rights was strongly associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance on abortion

rights (β= .444, p=.000). Furthermore, fusion with one's position on abortion rights was *not* significantly associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (β= .128, p=.220). These results support the hypothesis that fusion with a cause is associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward the cause with which the individual is fused, but not based on their stance toward other unrelated causes.

With this preliminary evidence in hand, studies 3-6 explore the behavioral consequences of fusion with a cause and essentialism in various contexts.

Study 3

In Study 3, I investigated the possibility that strongly fused individuals' tendency to hold essentialist beliefs about ideological adversaries leads to endorsement of discriminatory behaviors. In particular, this study tests the hypothesis that individuals strongly fused with a cause are unwilling to associate with people who hold opposing beliefs about the cause in any way, from being romantically or socially involved with them to simply giving them the time of day.

Within the context of a hypothetical dating scenario, participants evaluated a series of profiles of potential dating partners. Each profile contained information about one sociopolitical position that the hypothetical partner supported, and two personality traits that described the hypothetical partner. Each participant viewed a profile, which was referred to as the "target profile", which described a potential dating partner who possessed two traits that the participant had previously rated as "absolutely essential or most desirable in an ideal romantic partner", but also supported the position on abortion rights opposite from the participant's (e.g., if the participant was pro-choice, the target profile partner was pro-life).

It was predicted that, despite the fact that the individual described in the target profile possessed highly desirable traits, individuals strongly fused with a cause would be significantly less willing to be romantically or socially involved with the person described in the target profile. Furthermore, it was predicted that strongly fused individuals' unwillingness to be romantically or socially involved with the person described in the target profile would be statistically mediated by self-reported essentialist

beliefs based on others' ideological stances on abortion rights. As with studies 1 and 2, the issue of abortion rights was chosen to be the focal cause with which to measure fusion in this study because most people have at least some opinion about abortion rights, and because fusion with one's position on abortion rights has been found to be normally distributed among Mechanical Turk participants in prior exploratory research.

Methods

A sample of 222 participants who were not in romantic relationships were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. This study was limited to individuals not in romantic relationships because romantically involved individuals may have been uncomfortable or hesitant to indicate their willingness to go on a date with a hypothetical dating partner in the study's hypothetical dating scenario. Participants learned before the study began that the eligibility criteria for this study required that they not currently be in a romantic relationship. To ensure participants followed these directions, the study began with a criteria check asking whether the participant was currently in a romantic relationship, along with several filler questions to avoid transparency. Any participant who indicated they were currently in a romantic relationship were prevented from completing the survey.

Participants learned of the broad purposes of the study, their privacy and confidentiality protections, and that the survey would take them approximately one hour to complete. Participants learned that their participation in this study would contribute to a worldwide body of research that was attempting to understand the many social and personal variables that make people attracted to each other. Participants then learned that

they would be presented with several profiles of potential dating partners and asked to rate them on various dimensions. Finally, participants learned that before they viewed these profiles, they would be asked some questions about their personality and beliefs.

Following the introduction, the first section of the survey asked participants to indicate which position they tend to side with on three prominent sociopolitical issues: (a) abortion rights (pro-choice or pro-life), (b) gun rights (pro-gun-rights or pro-gun-control), and (c) same-sex marriage (pro-marriage equality or anti-same-sex marriage). Participants then completed the modified verbal fusion scale (Gomez et al., 2011) measuring fusion with their positions on abortion rights, gun rights, and same-sex-marriage (Note: Although the focal cause with which fusion was measured in this study was one's position on abortion rights, participants completed measures of fusion with and essentialist beliefs about two other non-focal causes to prevent hypothesis guessing).

Next participants completed essentialist beliefs scales adapted from Bastian and Haslam (2006) measuring the extent to which participants categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward abortion rights, gun rights, and same-sex marriage. Example items included, "It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on [abortion rights/gun rights/same-sex marriage]", and "The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on [abortion rights/gun rights/same-sex marriage]". The full scale is included in the appendix.

After completing the fusion and essentialist beliefs scales, participants selected from a list of twenty traits (taken from Fletcher at al., 1999) (a) the three characteristics

that are absolutely essential or most desirable in an ideal romantic partner, and (b) the three characteristics that are least essential or lest desirable in an ideal romantic partner (Eastwick, Finkel, & Eagly, 2011). After completing this section, participants indicated the three characteristics that most accurately describe themselves (Note: The least desirable and self-descriptive traits were not actually used in the analysis of this study. These questions were asked in order to maximize the believability of our cover story that we were genuinely interested in the factors that drive interpersonal attraction).

Next, participants engaged in a hypothetical dating exercise. Participants saw profiles of five potential dating partners. Each partner profile listed two traits of the potential dating partner and one ideological position. For example, a profile could have read "Ambitious, kind, pro-gun rights". The focal profile for the purpose of this study, which was referred to as the "target profile", described a potential dating partner with two traits that the participant previously rated as highly desirable, but also supports the position on abortion rights that opposes the participant's own position. Participants also saw four other profiles, which were referred to as "distractor profiles", which contained two traits randomly chosen from the list of twenty traits previously shown in the study, along with one random ideological position. The ideological position shown was randomly chosen from five options: pro-marriage equality, anti-same-sex-marriage, pro-gun rights, pro-gun control, or the *same* position as the participant on abortion rights. Because the target profile portrayed a dating partner who supported the *opposite* position as the participant on abortion rights, this was the only ideological position that was not shown in any of the distractor profiles.

Before viewing the profiles, to enhance the believability of this hypothetical scenario and make it feel more natural, participants were instructed, "When viewing these profiles, try to imagine that you are on a dating website searching for a potential romantic partner." The five profiles (one target, four distractors) were then presented in random order. After viewing each dating partner profile, participants indicated: (a) how willing they would be to give this person the time of day if they asked, (b) how willing they would be to help this person with directions if they were lost, (c) how willing they would be to respond to a message on a dating website from this person, (d) how willing they would be to be friends with this person, and (e) how willing they would be to go on a date with this person. These questions were presented in this order, which was believed to be in increasing order of intimacy. Questions (a) and (b) were intended to be exploratory items to gauge whether certain (i.e., strongly fused) individuals were willing to behave in extreme ways (i.e., not even giving someone the time of day) to avoid interacting with non-like-minded individuals. After viewing and evaluating each profile, participants were be debriefed and given an opportunity to write any questions or comments they had about the study.

There were four primary and two secondary predictions for Study 3:

- P1) Fusion with one's position on abortion rights would be positively associated with holding essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.
- P2) Individuals strongly fused with their position on abortion rights would be especially unwilling to go on a date with the person described in the target profile

relative to the people described in the distractor profiles, and this effect would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights

- P3) Individuals strongly fused with their position on abortion rights would be especially unwilling to be friends with the person described in the target profile relative to the people described in the distractor profiles, and this effect would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.
- P4) Individuals strongly fused with their position on abortion rights would be especially unwilling to respond to a message on a dating website from the person described in the target profile relative to the people described in the distractor profiles, and this effect would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.
- S1) Individuals strongly fused with their position on abortion rights would be especially unwilling to help the person described in the target profile with directions if they were lost relative to the people described in the distractor profiles, and this effect would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.
- S2) Individuals strongly fused with their position on abortion rights would be especially unwilling to give the time of day to the person described in the target profile relative to the people described in the distractor profiles, and this effect

would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.

Results

Results from Study 3 supported all primary and secondary predictions. For our outcome variables, five difference scores were computed by subtracting willingness to (1) give the time of day to, (2) give directions to, (3) respond to a message from, (4) be friends with, and (5) go on a date with the target profile owner from the *average* willingness to perform each of these actions with the four distractor profile owners (difference score = average willingness to perform action with four distractor profile owners – willingness to perform action with target profile owner). These five difference scores represented willingness to perform each of these five actions with the target profile owner *relative to* the average willingness to perform each of these five actions with the four distractor profile owners. Thus, high difference scores indicated lower willingness to perform these actions with the target profile owner relative to the distractor average. These five difference scores were then aggregated into a composite outcome variable representing *composite relative unwillingness to interact* with the target profile owner (α = .899). This composite outcome variable was the primary dependent variable used for our analysis.

A linear regression model tested the main effect of fusion on composite relative unwillingness to interact with the target profile owner. Additionally, a mediation model was run using Preacher & Hayes (2004) bootstrapping methods to determine whether essentialist beliefs mediated this effect. The statistical significance for bootstrapping

analyses refers to the 95% CI's of the indirect effect estimates (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002), and for *p*-values we abide by the conventional α level cutoff of .05.

Fusion significantly predicted composite relative unwillingness to interact with the target profile owner (*ß*= 1.983, *p*=.003). Furthermore, the effect of fusion on composite relative unwillingness to interact with the target profile owner was statistically mediated by holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance on abortion rights (5000 Bootstrap samples, Boot LLCI=.792, Boot ULCI=2.658; Sobel *Z* = 3.863, *p*=.000). The indirect effect of fusion on composite relative unwillingness to interact with the target profile owner controlling for essentialist beliefs was non-significant (*ß*= .407, *p*=.579), indicating full statistical mediation (Figure 1).

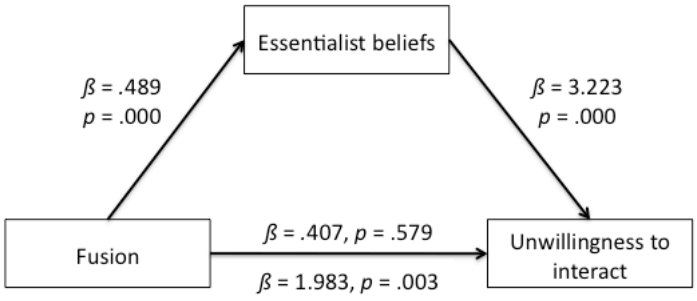

FIGURE 1: Essentialist beliefs mediate the effect of fusion with a cause on unwillingness to interact with cause opponents.

We also ran five linear regression models testing the main effects of fusion on our five individual difference score outcome variables. Additionally, five mediation models were run to test whether essentialist beliefs mediated each of these effects. Each of these models were statistically significant and supported the overall analysis.

The results from Study 3 strongly support the prediction that fusion with a cause leads to discriminatory behaviors against those who think differently about the cause. The mediating role of essentialist beliefs may shed light on the mechanism behind these discriminatory behaviors.

Study 4

Study 4 was intended to expand on the findings of Study 3 by exploring links between fusion with a cause and another form of discrimination rooted in essentialist thinking: discriminatory hiring practices. Specifically, Study 4 tested the prediction that individuals strongly fused with a cause would be uniquely unwilling to hire potential job candidates who supported the opposing side of the cause, and that this unwillingness would be rooted in essentialist beliefs toward people who think differently about the cause.

In a hypothetical job-hiring scenario, participants evaluated a series of bogus job applicants' Facebook profiles and rated the degree to which they would be willing to hire each applicant. Participants learned that the job position to be filled was an office clerk (I chose a job that was not cognitively demanding so that participants' hiring decisions could not reasonably be based on the job applicants' possession of a rare or specialized skill set). Each participant viewed five hypothetical applicants' Facebook profiles, four of which were referred to as "distractor profiles", and one of which was referred to as the "target profile". The target profile was similar in structure to the distractor profiles except that in one condition (congruent), it contained information suggesting that the applicant to whom the profile belonged supported the same position on gun rights as the participant, and in the other condition (incongruent) the target profile owner supported the opposite position on gun rights as the participant. It was hypothesized that strongly fused individuals' tendency for essentialist thinking should lead them to be especially willing to hire the target applicant relative to distractors in the congruent condition, and

especially unwilling to hire the target applicant relative to distractors in the incongruent condition.

Methods

A sample of 232 participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants were limited to individuals who had at least some opinion on the issue of gun rights. Participants learned of their privacy and confidentiality protections and that the survey would take them approximately one hour to complete.

Participants learned that the broad purpose of the study was to investigate how people make hiring decisions. Participants were instructed to imagine that they were an office manager at a medium-sized company who had been put in charge of hiring a new office clerk. Participants learned that they would view Facebook profiles of five job applicants, and that they were to rate how willing they would be to hire each applicant. Finally, participants learned that before they viewed these Facebook profiles, they would be asked some questions about their personality and beliefs.

Following the introduction, the first section of the survey asked participants to indicate which position they tended to side with on five prominent sociopolitical issues: (a) gun rights (pro-gun-rights or pro-gun-control), (b) abortion rights (pro-choice or pro-life), (c) same-sex marriage (pro-marriage equality or anti-same-sex marriage), (d) climate change (believe climate change is real or do not believe climate change is real), and (e) minimum wage (support or oppose raising minimum wage in the U.S.). Participants then completed the modified verbal fusion scale (Gomez et al., 2011) measuring fusion with their positions on gun rights, abortion rights, and same-sex-

marriage (Note: Although the focal cause with which fusion was being measured in this study was one's position on gun rights, participants completed measures of fusion with their positions on the two other non-focal causes to prevent hypothesis guessing).

Participants then completed essentialist beliefs scales adapted from Bastian and Haslam (2006) measuring the extent to which participants categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward gun rights, abortion rights, and same-sex marriage. Example items include, "It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on [gun rights/abortion rights/same-sex marriage]", and "The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on [gun rights/abortion rights/same-sex marriage]". The full scale is included in the appendix.

After completing the fusion and essentialist beliefs scales, participants engaged in a hypothetical job hiring exercise. Participants viewed Facebook profiles of five hypothetical job applicants, four of which were referred to as "distractor profiles", and one of which was referred to as the "target profile". Each profile primarily consisted of innocuous filler information, like humorous pictures or articles, posts from friends, information about the applicant's hobbies, etc. However, each profile also contained one post which portrayed the profile owner's ideological position on a given issue. For example, a profile might have featured a post that read, "Proud to be a pro-life American", clearly suggesting that the profile owner supported the pro-life position on abortion rights. To reduce noise, the four distractor profiles all showed an ideological position that the participant agreed with (based on their prior indications in the survey) on

the issues of abortion rights, same-sex marriage, climate change, and minimum wage. In a further effort to reduce noise, all profile owners (distractors *and* target) were Caucasian males in order to prevent hiring bias on the basis of race or gender.

Participants were randomly assigned to either the congruent condition or the incongruent condition. In the congruent condition, participants saw a target profile suggesting that the profile owner supported the *same* position as the participant on the issue of gun rights. In the incongruent condition, participants saw a target profile suggesting that the profile owner supported the *opposite* position as the participant on the issue of gun rights. Other than this variation in which side of the gun rights debate the target profile owner supported, the rest of the information contained in the target profile was the same for all participants.

Participants viewed these five Facebook profiles in random order. After viewing each profile, participants indicated the extent to which they would be willing to hire the job applicant described in the profile. After viewing and rating each profile, participants were debriefed and given an opportunity to write any questions or comments they had about the study.

There were three primary predictions for Study 4:

- Fusion with one's position on gun rights would be positively associated with holding essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward gun rights.
- In the congruent condition, individuals strongly fused with their position on gun rights would be especially willing to hire the job candidate described in

the target profile relative to those described in the distractor profiles, and this effect would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward gun rights.

- In the incongruent condition, individuals strongly fused with their position on gun rights would be especially *un*willing to hire the job candidate described in the target profile relative to those described in the distractor profiles, and this effect would be mediated by essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward gun rights.

Results

The results from Study 4 provided mixed support for our hypotheses. As with Study 3, our dependent variables were difference scores representing willingness to hire the target profile owner relative to average willingness to hire the four distractor profile owners. Two primary outcome variables were computed, one for each condition. In the congruent condition, the outcome variable was computed by subtracting the average willingness to hire the four distractor candidates from willingness to hire the target profile candidate (Congruent outcome = Target willingness – Average distractor willingness). A high score on this variable indicated *greater* willingness to hire the *congruent* candidate relative to distractors. In the incongruent condition, the outcome variable was computed by subtracting the willingness to hire the target profile candidate from the average willingness to hire the four distractor candidates (Incongruent outcome = Average distractor willingness – Target willingness). A high score on this variable indicated *lower* willingness to hire the *incongruent* candidate relative to distractors. Thus,

in both conditions, we predicted that fusion would be positively associated with the difference score outcome variable.

Fusion with one's position on gun rights was strongly associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance on gun rights (β= .522, p=.000). In the incongruent condition, fusion significantly predicted unwillingness to hire the target profile candidate relative to the distractor profile candidates (β= 3.184, p=.052). Furthermore, the effect of fusion on relative unwillingness to hire the target profile candidate in the incongruent condition was statistically mediated by holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance on gun rights (5000 Bootstrap samples, Boot LLCI=1.367, Boot ULCI=6.112; Sobel Z = 3.282, p=.001). The indirect effect of fusion on relative unwillingness hire the target profile candidate in the incongruent condition controlling for essentialist beliefs was non-significant (β= .241, p=.891), indicating full statistical mediation (Figure 2).

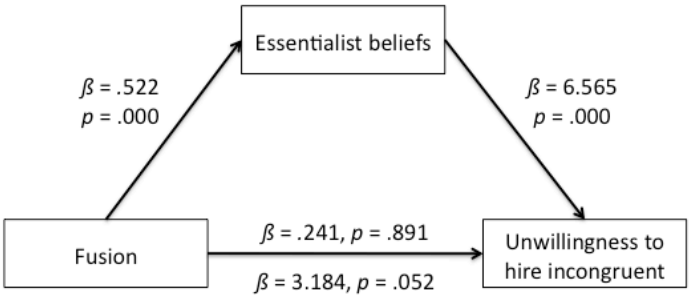

FIGURE 2: Essentialist beliefs mediate the effect of fusion with a cause on unwillingness to hire cause opponents.

Fusion was not associated with willingness to hire the target profile candidate relative to the distractor profile candidates in the congruent condition (β= .528, p=.343)[2]. Taken together, the results of Study 4 provide further evidence for the idea that fusion with a cause is associated with negative discrimination against those who think differently about the cause, and that these discriminatory behaviors may be explained by strongly fused individuals' tendency to essentialize opponents of the cause. Interestingly, however, fusion with a cause did not predict positive discrimination toward fellow cause supporters.

[2] To test for possible order effects, we investigated whether the target profile being presented first, before the distractor profiles, may have moderated the effect of fusion on willingness to hire the target candidate. Order effects did not moderate the effect of fusion on willingness to hire the target candidate in either the congruent (p=.255) or incongruent (p=.899) condition.

Study 5

Study 5 focused on a sociopolitical issue that has generated considerable discussion, debate, and activity at the University of Texas (UT) and throughout the United States. On June 1, 2015, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed S.B. 11, also know as the "campus carry" law, which provided that license holders may carry a concealed handgun throughout university campuses starting August 1, 2016. The law gave public universities some discretion to regulate campus carry. UT community members including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents had mixed reactions to this new legislation. Some UT community members created a group called "Gun-Free UT" and organized a petition, demonstrations, and several group meetings to advocate that the university be declared an entirely gun-free zone. Other UT community members supported the new campus carry law and organized public demonstrations to defend their right to legally carry firearms on campus.

Interestingly, proponents of both sides of the debate felt threatened by the agenda of the other side. Whereas opponents of campus carry felt that allowing firearms to be carried on campus was a threat to their personal safety, campus carry supporters felt that license holders being prohibited from carrying firearms on campus threatened their personal freedom, constitutional right to bear arms, and ability to defend themselves. With many passionate supporters on both sides of the debate, the campus carry law provided a promising context in which to study the cognitive and behavioral effects of fusion with a cause.

In Study 5, I sought to answer two overarching questions. First, do essentialist beliefs based on others' opinions about a cause lead individuals strongly fused with a cause to endorse derogatory and discriminatory behaviors toward non-like-minded individuals? Second, because strongly fused individuals feel a sense of cause-directed agency that motivates them to stave off threats to the cause (cf. Swann et al., 2014b), might threats to the cause uniquely amplify strongly fused individuals' endorsement of derogatory and discriminatory behaviors toward those who disagree?

Methods

A total of 137 current UT undergraduate students were recruited using the Department of Psychology's subject pool. The experiment consisted of an online survey which students completed for course credit. Participants learned of the broad purposes of the study, their privacy and confidentiality protections, and that the survey would take them approximately one hour to complete.

In the first section of the survey, participants read a brief description of the campus carry law that was recently passed in Texas, and then indicated whether they favored the pro-campus-carry position or the anti-campus-carry position. Next, participants completed an index of fusion with one's position on campus carry (e.g., "I have a deep emotional bond with the anti-campus-carry position") using a modified verbal fusion scale (Gomez et al., 2011).

Participants then completed an essentialist beliefs scale adapted from Bastian and Haslam (2006) measuring the extent to which participants categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward campus carry. Example items

include, “It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on campus carry”, and “The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on campus carry”.

The experimenter then randomly assigned participants to either a threat condition in which they read an article that threatened their position on campus-carry, or a control condition in which they read an article about UT having some of the best professors in the country. Since not all participants sided with the same position on campus-carry, threat articles were slightly different for pro-campus-carry participants and anti-campus-carry participants. However, these articles were carefully designed to be as similar as possible with regard to wording, structure, and degree of conveyed threat. Both threat articles informed readers that UT had assembled a working group to determine how to implement the state legislature’s recent passage of campus carry laws. The threat article which was shown to pro-campus-carry participants included the following information: “After careful consideration, the working group has tentatively decided that it will remain illegal for any UT student, faculty, or staff member to carry a concealed firearm in any campus facility, regardless of whether they hold legal credentials to carry a concealed firearm. While UT acknowledges and respects the laws of the State of Texas, allowing the concealed carry of firearms on UT campus poses a threat to the safety and security of our campus and its members.” The threat article which was shown to anti-campus-carry participants informed readers: “After careful consideration, the working group has tentatively decided that any UT student, faculty, or staff with the necessary legal credentials may legally carry a firearm in any campus facility. UT seeks to uphold the

laws of the State of Texas and will accordingly implement the right for license holders to carry firearms on UT campuses throughout the state." The full threat manipulation and control articles can be found in the appendix.

Immediately following the manipulation, affective arousal was measured using an emotions thermometer. Next, participants completed a measure of cause-directed agency, which was a modified version of a scale designed to measure group-directed feelings of agency (Gomez et al., 2011) containing items such as "I am able to control whether the goals of the pro/anti-campus-carry position are fulfilled".

Next, participants answered a series of questions measuring endorsement of behaviors that derogate or discriminate against people who oppose their position on campus carry. Similar to the outcomes in Study 3, participants indicated whether they would be willing to be romantically or socially involved with individuals who think differently than they do about campus carry, and whether they would be willing to provide them directions or the time of day.

Finally, participants learned that UT community members would be gathering on campus within the next week to sabotage an event being organized by the opposing position on campus carry and antagonize supporters of the opposing position. Participants indicated whether they would like to learn more information about this event, including date, time, and location. The outcome variable reflected the binary decision to either request or not request information about this upcoming event to support the cause. Participants also indicated the extent to which they intended to attend this event.

Participants were then debriefed and given an opportunity to write any questions or comments they had about the study.

There were four predictions for Study 5:

- Fusion with one's position on campus carry would be positively associated with endorsement of discriminatory and derogatory behaviors toward ideological opponents
- Holding essentialist beliefs toward others based on their ideological stance toward campus carry would mediate the effect of fusion on endorsement of discriminatory and derogatory behaviors
- Threat to one's position on campus carry would increase endorsement of discriminatory and derogatory behaviors for strongly, but not weakly fused individuals
- Under threat, strongly fused individuals' discriminatory and derogatory behaviors would be mediated by cause-directed agency and affective arousal

Results

The results of Study 5 provided mixed support for our central hypotheses. As with Studies 1-4, fusion with a cause was strongly associated with holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward the cause (β= .419, p=.000). Similar to Study 3, we computed a composite variable by taking the average of participants' willingness to date, be friends with, give directions to, and give the time of day to someone who

supported the opposing position on campus carry. This outcome variable reflected *composite willingness to interact* with cause opponents (α = .834).

Fusion with a cause was significantly negatively related to composite willingness to interact with cause opponents (β= -.172, p=.003), indicating that individuals strongly fused with their position on campus carry were strongly unwilling to interact with those who supported the opposite position on campus carry. Further, this effect was statistically mediated by holding essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward campus carry (5000 Bootstrap samples, Boot LLCI=-.168, Boot ULCI=-.044; Sobel Z = -2.837, p=.005). The indirect effect of fusion on composite willingness to interact controlling for essentialist beliefs was non-significant (β=-.071, p=.268), indicating full statistical mediation (Figure 3).

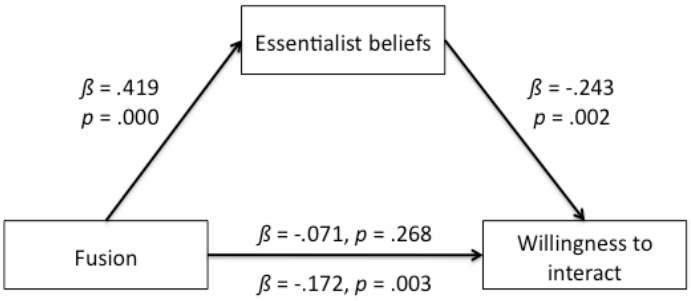

FIGURE 3: Essentialist beliefs mediate the effect of fusion with a cause on willingness to interact with cause opponents.

Fusion with a cause was also a significant predictor of the desire to learn more information (time, date, location, etc.) about an event that was presumably being held on campus in the near future to sabotage and antagonize supporters of the opposing position on campus carry (β=.426, p=.014). Additionally, fusion predicted whether participants

actually intended to attend this event (*ß*=.155, *p*=.000). Essentialist beliefs did not mediate either of these effects.

We predicted that threats to the cause would amplify strongly fused individuals' endorsements of the previously mentioned outcomes (unwillingness to interact with cause opponents, desire to learn more about an event to antagonize cause opponents, and intentions to attend this event). The interaction of fusion and threat was not associated with willingness to interact with cause opponents (*ß*=-.051, *p*=.655) or intentions to attend the event (*ß*=-.034, *p*=.66). However, the interaction of fusion and threat was a significant predictor of desire to learn more about the event (*ß*=.77, *p*=.041) such that strongly fused individuals in the threat condition were most likely to request more information about the event (Figure 4).

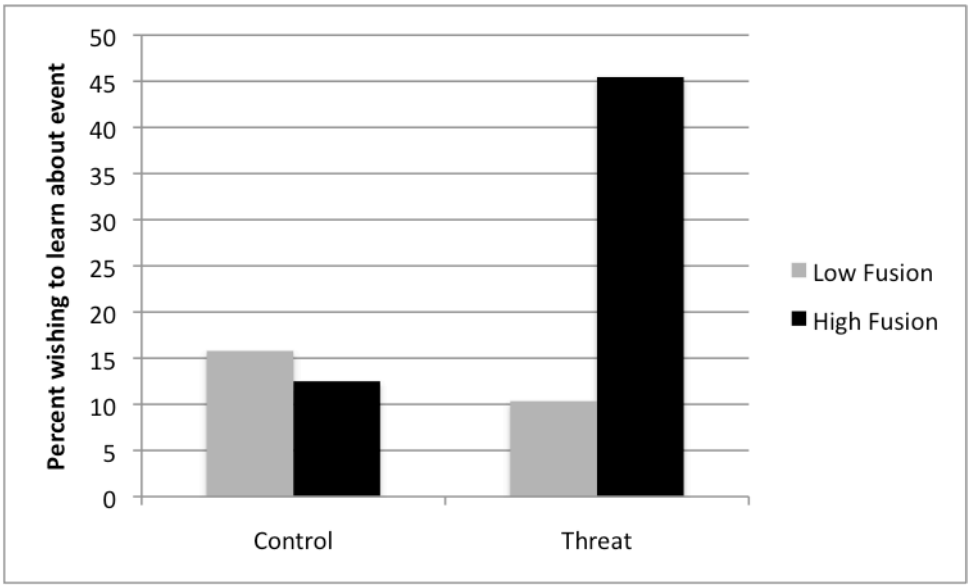

FIGURE 4: Threat moderates the effect of fusion on desire to learn more about a cause-related event.

We also tested the prediction that, under threat, strongly fused individuals endorsement of our three primary outcomes would be mediated by cause-directed agency and affective arousal (moderated mediation). This prediction was not supported, as none of our predicted moderated mediation models were statistically significant with either cause-directed agency or affective arousal as mediators. However, there was a strong main effect of fusion predicting cause-directed agency (β=.357, p=.000).

Taken together, the results of Study 5 support the hypothesis that fusion with a cause is predictive of discriminatory behaviors against those who oppose the cause, and that these discriminatory behaviors may be rooted in essentialist thinking. Further, Study 5 showed that strongly fused individuals want to learn about and attend events where they can support their cause and antagonize cause opponents. Fusion was also associated with cause-directed agency, indicating that strongly fused individuals feel a sense of personal responsibility over matters relating to the cause. Threat amplified strongly fused individuals' desire to learn more information about an event where they could support the cause, but it did not amplify strongly fused individuals' intentions to attend this event or unwillingness to interact with cause opponents. Threat also did not amplify strongly fused individuals' affective arousal or sense of cause-directed agency. We investigated the possibility of a ceiling effect whereby lack of variance among strongly fused individuals with regard to our outcomes may have diminished their responsiveness to the threat manipulation. The pattern of variances lent no support to this explanation, however.

Study 6

In Study 6, I sought to determine whether individuals strongly fused with a cause would be especially willing to behave in ways that support the cause. In particular, Study 6 explores whether fusion with a cause and essentialist beliefs based on others' positions toward the cause influence single-issue voting behaviors, with the prediction that strongly fused individuals would be uniquely willing to base their voting decisions on whether a particular political candidate supports the cause with which they are fused.

Study 6 was conducted using a longitudinal design in the context of the Spanish presidential election. Fusion with one's position on abortion rights and essentialist beliefs about others based on their stance toward abortion rights were measured the week before the Spanish presidential election, and self-reported voting behaviors were measured the week after the election. Abortion rights were used at the primary cause with which fusion and essentialist beliefs were measured in this study because, as in the United States, abortion rights are a prominent sociopolitical issue in Spanish society, and voters tend to know where all presidential candidates stand with regard to their beliefs about abortion rights.

Methods

A sample of 211 undergraduates at Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia (UNED) were recruited to participate in this study in exchange for research credit. Participants were informed at time one (the week before the presidential election) that they would be contacted again in roughly one week for a second part of the study (time two).

At time one, participants indicated which position they tend to side with on the issue of abortion rights (pro-choice or pro-life). Participants then completed the modified verbal fusion scale (Gomez et al., 2011) measuring fusion with their position on abortion rights, and another verbal fusion scale measuring fusion with their preferred political party. Participants then completed an essentialist beliefs scale adapted from Bastian and Haslam (2006) measuring the extent to which they categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward abortion rights.

At time two, participants reported who they actually voted for in the Spanish presidential election. Answer choices included the most prominent presidential candidates, "Other", "I didn't vote", and "I'd rather not say". The outcome variable was binary and reflected whether the participant did or did not vote for a political candidate who supported the same position as them on abortion rights. Participants were then debriefed and given an opportunity to write any questions or comments they had about the study.

There were two primary predictions for Study 6:

- Fusion with one's position on abortion rights would be positively associated with holding essentialist beliefs based on others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.
- Individuals strongly fused with their position on abortion rights would be especially likely to vote for a political candidate who supports the same position on abortion rights (congruent vote), and this effect would be mediated by

essentialist beliefs associated with others' ideological stances toward abortion rights.

Results

The results of Study 6 provided mixed support for our central hypotheses. As with studies 1-5, the results of Study 6 showed a strong relationship between fusion and essentialist beliefs (ß = .443, *p*=.000). Additionally, fusion with one's position on abortion rights was associated with voting for a political candidate who supported the same position on abortion rights (ß = .257, *p*=.028). However, the hypothesized link between essentialist beliefs and congruent vote was not statistically significant (ß = .237, *p*=.071), which is why the mediation model with fusion as the independent variable, congruent vote as the dependent variable, and essentialist beliefs as the mediating variable was also non-significant (Sobel *Z*=.843, *p*=.399)[3].

In an additional analysis, we explored whether fusion with one's preferred political party was associated with congruent vote, and found that this relationship was statistically significant (*ß* = .415, *p*=.003). Additionally, fusion with political party mediated the effect of fusion with a cause on congruent vote (5000 Bootstrap samples, Boot LLCI=.022, Boot ULCI=.263; Sobel *Z* = 2.233, *p*=.026). The indirect effect of fusion with a cause on congruent vote controlling for fusion with political party was non-significant (*ß*= .156, *p*=.210), indicating full statistical mediation (Figure 5).

[3] We also tested whether the interaction between fusion with a cause and essentialist beliefs predicted congruent vote, and this effect was non-significant (ß = -.024, *p*=.827).

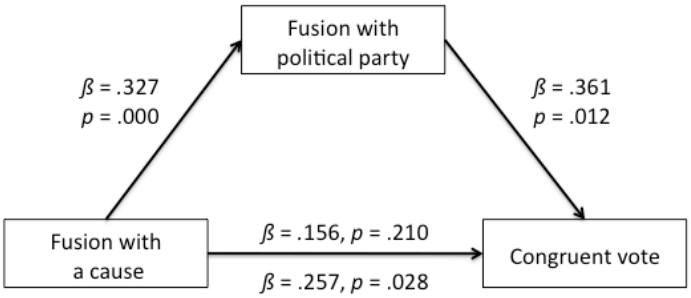

FIGURE 5: Fusion with political party mediates the effect of fusion with a cause on congruent voting.

The results of Study 6 provide further support for the strong association between fusion with a cause and essentialist thinking based on others' stance toward the cause. The results of Study 6 also show that fusion with a cause predicts overt, real-world behaviors that support the cause. Further, the longitudinal design of Study 6 provides support for the assumption that fusion with a cause predicts subsequent cause-related behaviors, and cannot be attributed to a tendency for cause-related behaviors to foster fusion. However, because essentialist beliefs did not significantly mediate the effect of fusion on voting behaviors, Study 6 does not provide support for essentialist beliefs as the underlying mechanism of the link between fusion and cause-related behaviors. Additionally, the strong relationship between fusion with political party and voting behaviors, and the mediating role of fusion with political party may suggest that, when it comes to voting behaviors, political party allegiance may have a stronger influence than one's level of fusion with a particular sociopolitical issue. Presumably, fusion with political party was a stronger predictor of voting behaviors than fusion with a cause because the former accounts for alignment with both people and a cause, whereas the latter only accounts for alignment with a cause.

Discussion

Taken together, the results of these studies shed light on the consequences of a novel form of alignment with one's principles and goals. Specifically, individuals strongly fused with a cause are especially prone to hold essentialist beliefs about other people based on their stance toward the cause, which leads to discrimination against non-like-minded individuals. Additionally, individuals strongly fused with a cause engage in overt behaviors that support the cause, like voting for cause-sharing presidential candidates.

The support gathered for the hypothesized links between fusion, essentialist thinking, and discriminatory behavior help explain why people who are deeply passionate about their beliefs often feel animosity toward ideological adversaries. Categorizing ideological dissenters as distinct "types" of people can lead to discrimination. Furthermore, by establishing and replicating strong links between fusion with a cause and essentialist thinking, these studies help to understand a specific individual difference—fusion with a cause—which makes certain people especially prone to such discriminatory tendencies. Furthermore, the mediating role of essentialist beliefs sheds light on the reason strongly fused individuals discriminate against ideological opponents.

In studies three, four and five, fusion with a cause was associated with unwillingness to date, be friends with, respond to a message from, and hire someone who held opposing beliefs about the cause. These findings, although informative, do not capture the full impact that strongly fused individuals' essentialist beliefs have on their behaviors. Strongly fused individuals' unwillingness to give directions or even the time

of day to opponents of the cause demonstrate the great lengths that strongly fused individuals will go to avoid interaction with non-like-minded individuals. These extreme efforts to avoid interaction with ideological adversaries highlight the powerful influence that fusion and essentialist beliefs have on one's social judgments and behaviors.

Interestingly, fusion and essentialism were associated with negative discrimination, but not positive discrimination. That is, strongly fused individuals' essentialist beliefs led them to discriminate against those who opposed the cause, but they did not show a tendency to favor others who supported the cause. This finding may be attributable to negative information being more salient and impactful than positive information, in line with a wide body of research on positive-negative asymmetry (Baumeister et al., 2001; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Rozin & Royzman, 2001) highlighting the disproportionate impact of negative over positive stimuli. In practice, when strongly fused individuals are deciding whether they want to date, socialize, or hire someone, they may consider it a "deal breaker" if that person holds opposing beliefs about a cause with which they are fused. However, ideological alignment with regard to the cause may not be sufficient to guarantee favorable treatment.

Study 5 replicated the effects of Studies 3 and 4 by showing that fusion with a cause is associated with endorsement of discrimination against cause opponents, and that these discriminatory inclinations can be explained by strongly fused individuals' tendency for essentialist thinking. Study 5 also showed that strongly fused individuals are especially interested in learning about and attending events where they can support the cause and antagonize cause opponents, and that strongly fused individuals experience a

heightened sense of cause-directed agency. Threats to the cause moderated strongly fused individuals endorsement of certain outcomes, but not others. One possible explanation for the lack of consistent threat effects may be that, because the threat came from the university working group that holds a great deal of power and authority, student participants may have felt powerless against the threat. Had the threat come from a less powerful or authoritative source, student participants may have felt like they could have actually done something about the threat, which may have led them to react differently.

Study 6 showed that individuals strongly fused with a cause were especially likely to vote for a presidential candidate who supported the cause. This finding established that fusion with a cause predicts real-world behaviors that benefit the cause. However, although fusion was associated with the tendency to essentialize others based on their stance toward the cause, essentialist beliefs did not mediate the effect of fusion on voting for a cause-supporting candidate. The lack of significant mediation in this case may be attributable to the noisy study environment in Study 6 compared to those of Studies 3 and 4. Whereas we were able to isolate the effect that disagreement over a particular issue had on fused individuals' behavior in Studies 3 and 4, in Study 6, participants knew far more about the real Spanish presidential candidates than simply their stance on abortion rights, and it is likely that these other considerations influenced them. Another possibility is that single-issue voting is not truly a discriminatory behavior, which is why it was not strongly linked to essentialist beliefs. Future studies should explore which types of cause-related behaviors are explained by essentialist thinking, and which are not.

The fact that fusion with political party mediated the effect of fusion with a cause on voting behavior in Study 6, rather than the opposite, indicates that fusion with political party is more determinative of voting behavior. Presumably, this reflects the fact that fusion with political party involves allegiance to both people (i.e., a sense of kinship with fellow political party supporters) *and* the cause or causes that the party supports, whereas fusion with a cause only involves allegiance to a cause. The predictive power of fusion with a cause may be limited in that it is not as predictive as fusion with groups when it comes to outcomes that are rooted in alignment with both the cause and a group, like voting behaviors. Study 6 may also shed light on the unique circumstances created when a cause is associated with a particular group. In this case, political parties are clearly supportive of one side of the abortion rights debate or the other. The fact that essentialist beliefs did not mediate the effect of fusion with a cause on voting behaviors may suggest that essentialism plays a stronger role when a cause is not associated with a group.

In closing, this series of studies has helped identify a class of individuals who are especially likely to discriminate against others on the basis of ideological differences. Moreover, essentialist thinking may explain *why* strongly fused individuals are prone to such discrimination. Viewing one's social environment in black and white, "us versus them" terms may come naturally for some, but it could have deleterious social consequences. Identifying fusion with a cause as a predictor of this mindset and these behaviors helps to elucidate the cognitive and emotional antecedents that drive these socially destructive phenomena.

Appendix

Studies 1-6

- Verbal fusion scale (adapted from Gomez et al., 2011)
    - The [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position is me.
    - I am one with the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position.
    - I feel immersed in the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position.
    - I have a deep emotional bond with the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position.
    - I am strong because of the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position.
    - I'll do more for the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position than any other cause supporter would do.
    - I make the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position strong.
- Essentialist beliefs based on ideology (modified from Bastian and Haslam, 2006)
    - This scale measures the extent to which participants categorize others into distinct types of people based on their ideological positions toward abortion rights or gun rights.
        - It is possible to know about many aspects of a person once you become familiar with their stance on [abortion rights/gun rights].
        - Generally speaking, once you know someone's position on [abortion rights/gun rights] it is possible to predict how they will behave in most contexts.
        - Become familiar with someone's stance on [abortion rights/gun rights] allows you to know what 'type' of person they are relatively quickly.
        - The kind of person someone is, is clearly defined; they are either [pro-life or pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights or pro-gun-control].
        - There are two types of people in this world: [pro-life and pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights and pro-gun-control].
        - The kind of person someone is can be largely attributed to their ideological stance on [abortion rights/gun rights].

Study 1

- Attitudes scales
    - General attitude favorability: "What is your opinion about the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position?" (Please indicate your opinion on a scale from 1= against to 9= in favor) (Clarkson et al., 2009)

- Attitude accessibility (Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989)—response latency for general attitude favorability item
- Attitude extremity (Binder et al., 2009)—response to attitude favorability item (1-9) minus scale midpoint (5)
- Attitude ambivalence (Conner et al., 2003)
  - P: "Consider, for a few moments, only the POSITIVE things about the (e.g.,) pro-choice position, and ignore any negative things about it. Please rate how positive those positive things are. [1-5]"
  - N: "Consider, for a few moments, only the NEGATIVE things about the pro-choice position, and ignore any positive things about it. Please rate how negative those negative things are. [1-5]"
  - Ambivalence = (P+N)/2 - |P-N|
    - This is called the "Griffin calculation"
- Attitude certainty: "How certain are you of your opinion about the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position?" (Please indicate your response on a scale from 1= not certain at all to 9= extremely certain) (Tormala, Clarkson, & Petty, 2006; derived from Fazio & Zanna, 1978)
- Attitude importance: "To what extent is the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position personally important to you?" and "How much do you care about [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position?" (Please indicate your response on a scale from 1= not at all to 9= very much) (Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995)
- Attitude involvement: "To what extent is it important that the government does what you think is best for the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position?" (Please indicate your response on a scale from 1= not at all to 9= very much) (Lavine, Borgida, & Sullivan, 2000)
- Attitude centrality: "To what extent does your opinion toward the [pro-life/pro-choice] / [pro-gun-rights/pro-gun-control] position reflect your core values and beliefs?" (Please indicate your response on a scale from 1= not at all to 9= very much) (Clarkson et al., 2009)

Study 3

- Ideal traits questionnaire (adapted from Eastwick, Finkel, & Eagly, 2011)
  - Participants select from a list of various traits (taken from Fletcher et al., 1999) (a) the three characteristics that are absolutely essential or most desirable in an ideal romantic partner, (b) the three characteristics that are least essential or least desirable in an ideal romantic partner, and (c) the three characteristics that most accurately describe yourself.
- Partner evaluations
  - If you bumped into this person at the grocery store, how willing would you be to give them the time of day if they asked?

- If you encountered this person on the street and the were lost, how willing would you be to help them with directions?
- If this person sent you a message on a dating website, how likely would you be to respond?
- How willing would you be to be friends with this person?
- How willing would you be to go on a date with this person?
- (all on a scale from 0=not at all willing to 100=completely willing)

Study 4

- Job applicant evaluation
  - How willing would you be to hire this person as an office clerk?
  - (on a scale from 0= not at all willing to 100=completely willing)

Study 5

- Cause-directed agency (adapted from Gomez et al., 2011)
  - "I am able to control whether the goals of the pro/anti-campus-carry position are fulfilled."
  - "I usually feel responsible for whether the pro/anti-campus-carry position meets its goals."
  - "I am able to control whether the pro/anti-campus-carry position succeeds or fails."
  - "I feel as responsible for the successes and failures of the pro/anti-campus-carry position as I do my own personal successes and failures."
  - "I feel responsible for defending the principles of the pro/anti-campus-carry position."
  - "I am able to control the actions of other supporters of the pro/anti-campus-carry position."
- Manipulation:
  - Threat condition: Participants in the threat condition will read an article that threatens their position on campus-carry.
    - Pro-campus-carry participants in the threat condition will read the following:
      - *"UT has assembled a working group to determine how to implement the state legislature's recent passage of campus carry laws (SB11) granting license holders the right to carry a concealed handgun throughout university campuses starting August 1, 2016. Although this legislation has passed at the state level, the law gives universities full discretion over how to implement campus carry laws. After careful consideration, the working group has tentatively decided that it will remain illegal for any UT student, faculty, or staff to carry a concealed firearm in any campus facility, regardless of whether they hold legal credentials to*

carry a concealed firearm. While UT acknowledges and respects the laws of the State of Texas, allowing the concealed carry of firearms on UT campus poses a threat to the safety and security of our campus and its members. For this reason, UT has decided not to implement campus carry laws on any of their campuses throughout the state. Before finalizing this decision, the campus carry working group is scheduled to hold a meeting next month to review any remaining concerns from UT community members."

- Anti-campus-carry participants in the threat condition will read the following:
  - *"UT has assembled a working group to determine how to implement the state legislature's recent passage of campus carry laws (SB11) granting license holders the right to carry a concealed handgun throughout university campuses starting August 1, 2016. Although this legislation has passed at the state level, the law gives universities full discretion over how to implement campus carry laws. After careful consideration, the working group has tentatively decided that any UT student, faculty, or staff with the necessary legal credentials may legally carry a firearm in any campus facility. UT seeks to uphold the laws of the State of Texas and will accordingly implement the right for license holders to carry firearms on UT campuses throughout the state. Before finalizing this decision, the campus carry working group is scheduled to hold a meeting next month to review any remaining concerns from UT community members."*

- Control condition:
  - All participants in the control condition will read the following:
    - *"The University of Texas at Austin has some of the best professors in the country. Based on the opinions from the students, that is. Ratemyprofessor.com released a list of the schools with the highest faculty ratings by students. The University of Texas finished in 12th place. Topping the list was Ole Miss, followed by the University of Wisconsin and James Madison. Texas A&M was the only other Texas school on the list, finishing in 7th."*

- Emotions thermometer
  - By clicking and dragging the sliding scale below, please indicate your mood right now.
- Event to support/oppose campus carry

- *Students, faculty, and other campus community members are gathering on campus to PROTEST/VOICE THEIR SUPPORT FOR [OPPOSITE OF PARTICIPANT] the Campus Carry Law (SB11) at UT next week on the West Mall. Although our presence likely will not be welcome or appreciated, a group of campus carry SUPPORTERS/OPPONENTS [SAME AS PARTICIPANT] are intending to show up to this event to antagonize OPPONENTS/SUPPORTERS [OPPOSITE OF PARTICIPANT] and prevent them from spreading their faulty beliefs.*
- Would you like to learn more information about this event, including date, time, and location? (Yes/No)
- Do you intend to attend this event? (Definitely not—Definitely yes)

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